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J A N E S H O R E

T O H E R

K Cooper, (M. S.)

F R I E N D :

A

P O E T I C A L E P I S T L E.

B Y T H E

AUTHORESS of the EXEMPLARY MOTHER, &c.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. BECKET, the Corner of the Adelphi, in the Strand;

And Sold by J. FISKE, near Portman-Square. 1776.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

JANE SHORE

TO HER

FRIEND:

POLITICAL EPISTLES.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF THE EXEMPTARY MOTHER, &c.

LONDON:

Printed for T. Beckat, the Corner of the Strand;
And sold by J. Fisher, near St. Dunstons Church.



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T O

SOAME JENYNS, Esq.

S I R,

IT is not to return you public thanks for a private obligation, that I address myself to you at this time. The honour you conferred upon me, by the perusal of a production of mine, still in manuscript (put into your hands by an amiable, and much-valued friend) your own judicious, and candid remarks, and those which you were likewise the instrument of procuring me, from "The Terence of England, the mender of hearts," justly indeed claim, and have long inspired me with the sincerest gratitude.

The motive which influences me to request the favour of your patronage for the following Poem, arises from the public proof you have given, of being one of the best advocates, for the best of all religions. One of its principal characteristics, is, that whilst it chills the breast of the sinner with the certainty of
punish-

punishment, it cheers the heart of the penitent with the security of pardon. This principle I have endeavoured to inculcate in the following Poem, by the example of *Jane Shore*, and it is for that reason it claims the protection of the CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

May your excellent work be not only read, but studied; as I doubt not it will convert profession into practice, and transform infidels into christians! I trust that your's will be the reward of the "wise, to shine
" as the brightness of the firmament; and of those
" who, turning many to righteousness, shall be as the
" stars for ever and ever."

I am, Sir, with sincere esteem and respect,

Your obliged humble servant,

*Brooks-Hall, near
Norwich.*

Maria Susanna Cooper.

P R E F A C E.

IF, in an age which abounds with so many instances of conjugal infidelity, the remorse and penitence of *Jane Shore*, as described in the following Poem, shall deter one Female only from adding her example to the number; the Authorefs will be highly gratified.

To have written upon this subject without being indebted to Mr. *Rowe*, would have been almost impossible. She owes to that excellent writer three or four lines, which she has marked with inverted commas: and there are two or three passages, in which she has alluded to the same circumstances with Mr. *Rowe*, but the expressions are her own.

No notice is taken of *Jane Shore's* supposed connection with *Hastings*, as it rests entirely on the information of one writer, who, though respectable for his authority in general, yet as he lived long after the
time

time of *Edward*, can be considered in himself as no sufficient authority in this point; as it seems to be a report by no means probable, if we consider, that *Richard* never accuses her of this crime; which we cannot conceive him to have omitted if he had known her to have been guilty. Indeed it may be replied by the enemies of *Jane Shore*, that though *Richard* does not accuse her of this connection, yet in a proclamation, he declares her to have been guilty with the Marquis of *Dorset*. But allowing that the silence of *Richard* may be fairly admitted as a proof of her innocence, yet the Author thinks his accusation will not, with fair and impartial judges, be esteemed any evidence of her guilt. Especially if they take into consideration, not only his generally acknowledged character (notwithstanding Mr. *Walpole's* ingenious doubts) but likewise the false, and indeed ridiculous charge, on pretence of which he took away her life; though her amiable affection for *Edward's* children, was the real occasion of his aversion to her.

J A N E S H O R E,

T O H E R

F R I E N D.

O H! Thou who in my late degenerate days,
Indulgent to the deeds thou couldst not praise,
Still saw'st, with friendship's fond, and partial eye,
Faults, which from friendship, should have drawn a sigh;
Who, to a wretch abandon'd—lost—forlorn,
Still cheer'st my eve of greatness, as its morn!
Say, thro' the cloud of evils I deplore,
Beams there one ray of hope for wretched Shore?

How blythe, how careless, was my virgin state!
My early marriage, stamp'd my future fate!
Say, ye who bear the soft parental name,
Must filial duty urge no gentle claim!

Reason, the Parent's negative, allows,
 'Tis their consent must sanctify her vows.
 Yet, to a Parent's arbitrary choice,
 Must the child yield with unresisting voice?
 Should not the sympathies of friendship move,
 'Till the heart feels, before it pledges love?

BUT can a Parent's faults absolve the wife?
 She gives her oath, she binds her faith for life;
 She vows to honour—to obey—to love—
 'Tis sworn on earth, 'tis ratified above.

PARENTAL guidance dictated my choice,
 I gave my hand—my liberty, my voice—
 But not my heart;—Obedience pledg'd my vows,
 And seal'd the fatal contract—Oh! my Spouse!
 As filial duty gave me to thy arms,
 Why did connubial virtue lose her charms?

Though

Though love ne'er wove for me the nuptial band,
 Yet gratitude might claim the faithful hand.
 Had I e'er cause to wish myself unwed? *
 Did not sweet peace her downy pinions spread?
 Clear was my life, as the unruffled stream,
 Sweet were my slumbers, as the infant's dream,
 "Till at the last a mighty spoiler came,"
 Robb'd me of peace, of innocence, of fame!
 Young, and unpractis'd in Love's dangerous wiles,
 I saw no ruin lurk beneath his smiles:
 Led by this wandering meteor of the heart,
 From virtue's paths, my devious steps depart;
 Pleas'd with the Monarch, with the Lover more,
 Forgetful of the sacred bands I wore;
 Lost to the purer joys of social life;
 To the chaste ties of daughter, friend, and wife;

* This word pleads SHAKESPEARE's authority.

Loft in the labyrinth of vice, I roam
To seek that bliss, I blindly left at home.

OH! Wretch, unmindful of the sacred source,
Whence social virtue flows with even course!
They, only they, can walk temptation's road,
Whose hope is Christian, and whose trust is GOD!

FAR other thoughts my heedless mind pursued,
For pompous ills, I flighted real good;
Tears, sighs, and blushes, were the only arms,
Oppos'd to Edward's captivating charms.
Oh! had I, vers'd in pure religion's lore,
Urg'd against Edward's pleas, the claims of *Shore*;
Urg'd, that my vows were register'd above,
That ev'n a look, might dart adulterous love!
Urg'd, that my solemn vows so firmly given,
Made ev'n a recreant wish, a crime in heaven!

My virtue then, had sav'd me from my fate,
And snatch'd me from the precipice of state!

AFFLICTION'S school, hath taught me to despise
The mask of vice, and folly's thin disguise.
Too long they rul'd with arbitrary sway,
Too long they led my erring heart astray!
Charm'd with an empire in my sovereign's breast,
Each glance, the softness of my soul confess.
Though royal Edward was the nation's pride,
Did not religion's laws, our loves divide?
Tho' view'd with wonder by th' admiring throng
Why did I gaze, why hear his soothing song?
Why did I quit the scenes of humble life?
And what were Edward's charms, to Shore's devoted wife?

"Ah! what had I to do with courts and kings?"
From virtue's root the flower of pleasure springs,

Pleasure

Pleasure divine ! which neither droops nor dies,
But breathes perennial fragrance through the skies.

THE glorious prospect vanish'd from my view!
My bosom's guardian from her charge withdrew.
Exil'd by me, her salutary voice,
No longer tutor'd, nor confirm'd my choice;
Passion usurp'd the helm to conscience given,
And all our love, was, enmity to heaven.
The breath of flattery fill'd our swelling sails,
Buoyant on hope, I fear'd no adverse gales,
Amidst the wreck of virtue, peace, and fame,
When passion bulg'd me on the rocks of shame;
Enrich'd with pleasure's variegated store
Delusive fancy sketch'd a mimic shore.

YET, when the sun of favour, shone most bright,
When my heart danc'd in measures of delight,

If from the wretched, I withheld a sigh,
 "Forgot the widow's want, or orphan's cry;"
 If to the naked, I denied my store,
 If e'er I turn'd the hungry from my door;
 "If I have known a good, I have not shar'd,"
 Or felt my charity by pride impair'd,
 If I did e'er with tyranny unite,
 Or leagued with power to trample upon right;
 Then, let mine enemies insult my grief,
 Nor yield me aid, who gave them no relief!

YET, oh my soul! forbear this rash defence,
 Appease thy GOD, by prayer, by penitence!
 Great were thy crimes!—Ah! sue to be forgiven!
 And bend submissive to the wrath of heaven!

DIDST thou not, wretch, forsake thy widow'd mate,
 With Edward revel in the guilt of state?

Didst

Did not thy husband prize his perjurd wife,
 Beyond his wealth, his friends, his fame, his life?
 Would he not gaze with rapture on thy face,
 'Till love had deified each fading grace?
 E're yet the wish was form'd within thy breast,
 Did not his ready love the grant suggest?
 Ah! couldst thou leave him?—Yet this wayward heart
 Felt his distress, with agonizing smart!
 Oh! when of late, this husband I descry'd,
 In happier days, my guardian, and my guide, }
 Tho' in my car, and plac'd by Edward's side,
 Sighs, tears, and shrieks, my bleeding heart express,
 And my touch'd soul, reverb'rates, his distress!
 Fixt on my husband's steps with eager view,
 My sad eyes gaz'd a long—a last adieu!
 A long farewell, to virtue, and to peace!
 Why did remorse, her kind remonstrance cease?

A while

Awhile, my royal captive sued in vain,
 Why did the tide of passion swell again?
 How vain were grandeur, homage, wealth, and power,
 To gild the gloom of guilt's desponding hour!

YET, how ensnaring, was the glittering scene!
 To vie in pomp and state with England's Queen!
 To me, each courtier bent his supple knee,
 The varying seasons seem'd to bloom for me;
 The choicest viands crown'd my splendid board,
 The richest elegance my wardrobe stor'd;
 To native beauty, foreign aids conduc'd,
 For me, Golconda, brightest gems produc'd;
 Each vain resource of meretricious art,
 Adorn'd my person, but debas'd my heart;
 To fix my Edward's love my constant care,
 For every vagrant wish concentrated there.

C

BUT

BUT oh ! how frail the love on beauty built !
 How short the empire of usurping guilt !
 My conscious heart with self-upbraidings toft,
 Regretted—ah !—too late---the innocence it loft.
 When vernal pleasure's opening buds expand,
 Beware the thorns, that wound the eager hand !
 Alas ! ſhe ne'er her lovers oaths can truſt,
 Who knows, *that* love, pronounceth him unjuſt !

WHERE now are all our dreams of promis'd bliſs ?
 I wake, conſign'd to horror's dark abyſs !
 How chang'd the ſcene !——no fawning courtier now,
 Smiles when I ſmile, nor bows to whom I bow.
 No more the ſeaſons court my varying taſte,
 No more with gems this faded form is grac'd !
 “ Off, off, ye lending !” I deſpiſe your aid,
 Weak all reſource, while virtue is betray'd !

That

That spacious dome where taste with splendour vy'd,
 The feat of folly, luxury, and pride,
 Ungrateful bars its once obsequious door,
 Nor e'er admits the wretched wanderer more.
 Ah! where shall helpless Jane for pity rove?
 By friends abandon'd, and undone by love!

THERE was a time, when I was blest by all,
 They shar'd my wealth, who shun me in my fall.
 Ev'n they whose fate was pendent on my look,
 Eye me askance, or scowl the stern rebuke!

O! HAD our virtue triumph'd over love,
 Were conscience guiltless, and did heaven approve;
 What bliss to meet before the throne of GOD,
 And undismay'd await, th' irrevocable nod!

WHAT! shall a king the delegate of heaven,
 To whom a nation's weal in trust is given!

Whose

Whose life should write a transcript of the laws,
 Say, shall he dare desert from virtue's cause?
 Ah! when the heedless flock runs far astray,
 What! must the shepherd feel, who led the way?
 Unhappy prince! whose greatness was thy bane,
 Votary of pleasure, yet the slave of pain!
 Untaught the rage of passion to controul,
 Or fix religion's empire in thy soul.

Thy closing scene now rises to my view,
 Thine eye conveys—a tremulous adieu!
 Ah! when enfeebled on the bed of death,
 While life's thin texture vibrates with thy breath,
 When passion's throbbing pulse no longer beats,
 And human vanities desert their seats,
 Now, when thou lift'st to heav'n th' imploring eye,
 Offer'st the contrite tear, the heart-drawn sigh,

Oh!

Oh ! may the grateful incense of thy prayer,
Ascend the skies, and find acceptance there.

Ah ! what remains for me ?---the harlot's name !
The gaze of pointing crouds---a deathless shame !
Oh ! let my tears efface each guilty stain !---
But---will not sighs, and tears, and prayers be vain ?
'Tis not the wreck of fortune I deplore,
My state, my grandeur sunk---to rise no more ;
'Tis not oppressive power that weighs me down,
The people's contumely, the great one's frown,
'Tis not this frail machine's impending doom,
Nor infamy pursuing to the tomb,
'Tis the lim'd soul's entangled state, annoys,
Estrang'd by sense from heaven's seraphic joys !

For Edward's sons heaves too the fervent sigh,
I read their sentence in fierce Gloucester's eye.

But

But I, tho' urg'd, shall I distress their youth?
 Forbid it, tendernefs! forbid it, truth!
 No! though the royal Edward's guilty flame!
 Betray'd me to remorse and endless shame!
 Ah! though I shar'd his crime, yet shall I dare
 For helpless innocence to spread a snare?
 Dear royal babes!——I mourn your train of woes,
 For you, this gushing stream of sorrow flows!
 What! shall I lengthen being by a crime?
 Barter immortal bliss, to purchase time?
 No! if my death your sacred rights can save,
 With joy, I'll rush through tortures, to the grave!

OH! heavens, the ministers of fate attend!
 They snatch me hence, they tear me from my friend!
 Shuddering on life's extremest verge I stand,
 And wait the sentence which my crimes demand!

Oh!

Oh! tortur'd heart, implore the aids of grace!
 A moment!—and eternity takes place.
 The tyrant dooms!—oh! hear thy suppliant's prayer,
 Father of mercies!—shield me from despair!
 Strengthen my weakness, and my fears controul —
 A gleam of joy revives my drooping soul!
 My heart emerges from the gulph of SENSE,
 Borne on the wings of FAITH and PENITENCE!
 With humble hope I lift my raptur'd eyes,
 And seek an intercessor in the skies!
 For each returning prodigal, he died!—
 Man's debt is paid!—and G O D is satisfied!
 Transcendant goodness! Angels! catch the sound!
 In hallelujahs, waft the tidings round!

OH! were a longer space of trial given!—
 But mute submission is the will of heaven!

Grievous

Grievous my doom—but heinous my offence—

Shall frailty dictate to omnipotence?

Refign'd I bend to man's severe decree!

My soul impatient struggles to be free,

"Shake off this mortal coil," and re-unite with thee

Thou goodness infinite! from earth I soar,

To realms, where sin,—and death,—and sorrow,—

reign no more!



F I N I S.

